



## Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies

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### Editorial

Sienna Craig

Mark Turin

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# Editorial

We learned of the earthquakes and aftershocks that devastated Nepal in April and May this year as our last issue, 35.1, was heading to press. As is often the case following a natural disaster of this magnitude, the social and political fault lines of the nation were immediately thrown into sharp relief, with Nepal's post-conflict status further complicated by the challenging context of post-earthquake reconstruction and rebuilding.

Regional and international media were quick to draw comparisons with the 8.0 magnitude 1934 earthquake that struck Nepal and Bihar, with some reporters even seeking out and interviewing the few remaining survivors of both quakes. Archival photographs that documented the devastation 80 years earlier quickly surfaced on social media, providing a powerful historical frame and temporal comparison to assess the current damage to lives and livelihoods. One enduring lesson from history is that the forces of nature cannot be easily overcome or mitigated.

Given these tumultuous times, the current issue's explicit focus on Himalayan histories is well timed. Emerging out of an exciting panel at the Association of Asian Studies conference in 2014, guest editors Catherine Warner and Arik Moran have assembled a rich collection of papers spanning the depth and breadth of the Greater Himalayan range. The scholarship in this volume spans space and time: from the formation of political youth publics in the late colonial period in Kumaun and Garhwal to the recoding of diplomatic protocols through gift

exchange and cultural encounters on the Anglo-Tibetan frontier; from an exploration of how the Nepali state evolved through methods of rule rather than through the performance of rituals and war to a study of the social and cultural encounters that helped transform Darjeeling into a vibrant Himalayan hub for vernacular modernity and local cosmopolitanism; from an examination of how early legends of walled-up women in western Himalayan states were linked to state formation and elite political mobilization to an important historical corrective concerning networks of private schools in Tibet in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Each research article in this themed issue offers readers an expansive and connective understanding of the historical relationships that bind the region together.

As an academic discipline, history is still regrettably underrepresented in scholarly research and publishing on the Himalaya, certainly by non-local researchers. In their insightful Introduction, Warner and Moran address the perception that "historians of the Himalaya have, till recently, been the odd ones out in most academic discussions on the region." This disconnect may be explained in many ways, including the institutionalization and availability of funding for field-based contemporary study (such as anthropology, sociology, geography, development studies and linguistics), the mainstreaming of the historical method beyond the confines of history as a discipline (akin to the uptake of ethnography beyond the discipline of

anthropology) and the language skills needed to engage with local archival sources. At any rate, this collection of six first-rate research articles, mostly by early career scholars, is a welcome and timely intervention that highlights the importance of history and historiography in the interdisciplinary and transregional study of the Himalaya.

This issue of *HIMALAYA* boasts other diverse delights: a visually enticing sketchbook on textiles curated by Emma Martin, a research paper on agricultural development in a Tibetan township by Scott Waldron and his co-authors and a more personal, and now tragically historical, *Perspectives* article by Geoff Childs and Alyssa Kaelin on the role that Briddim, a small village in northern Rasuwa District, Nepal, played in the intellectual development of two students who visited the region nearly three decades apart. We also mark the passing of the great French ethnologist Philippe Sagant (1936-2015) with the posthumous publication of his previously unpublished manuscript entitled 'The Death of a Headman.' This article is followed by a sensitive obituary in Sagant's honor compiled by Stéphane Gros and Grégoire Schlemmer. Our literary contribution in this issue is a modest collaboration between the two of us as editors—a small way of acknowledging the impact of Nepal's earthquakes and the ongoing political turmoil.

None of this work would be possible, of course, without the unflagging assistance and energy of many individuals. We wish to draw attention to the terrific team of library assistants at the

DeWitt Wallace Library at Macalester College, including the newly appointed Stella Wang, managed and supported by the tireless Jacki Betsworth. At UBC, we're grateful to graphic designer Lenkyn Ostapovich for creating such an arresting call for papers for what will be our final issue, Volume 37, Issue 2, on the Nepal earthquakes, and to recent anthropology graduate Kelsey Land for her generous assistance in copy editing a number of the articles that have been published in this issue.

The publication of this issue also marks another historical moment: the conclusion of Mary Cameron's term as President of the Association of Nepal and Himalayan Studies. Mary has spearheaded many exciting developments during her Presidency, including taking the Association from a Center in Developing Status with the Council of American Overseas Research Centers through to full CAORC status in 2013 to become the newest American Overseas Research Center. She has also been a committed supporter of the journal *HIMALAYA* and has worked productively and creatively to ensure that our open-access publishing model is built in a sustainable and financially secure way. We are truly grateful, and are pleased that Mary has chosen to share a few words of her own, below.

**Sienna Craig and Mark Turin**

**Editors, *HIMALAYA***

### Message from Outgoing ANHS

### President Mary Cameron

I've been honored to serve as the President of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies, 2012-2015. During my tenure, and with Executive Council consultation, ANHS launched the Kathmandu Research Center, hosted two Himalayan Studies Conferences at Western Michigan University and Yale University, and co-sponsored the last three Annual Kathmandu Conference on Nepal and the Himalaya. The association formulated several new policies and procedures that strengthened its committee structure, budgeting process, awards, and membership management. We enhanced and expanded our affiliation with CAORC, the US Embassy and the US Educational Foundation/Fulbright in Nepal, and with the Social Science Baha, while also adding several Nepal-based associations and institutions as partners. Our social media profile has greatly expanded, including three new websites for ANHS-US, ANHS-Kathmandu, and *HIMALAYA*. Importantly, ANHS responded in several ways to the devastating 2015 earthquakes in Nepal. Finally, I worked closely with the editors of *HIMALAYA* to successfully navigate the journal's transition to an open access publication available to all and in print format for those who choose, all without raising membership fees for U.S. members, decreasing fees for Asian members, and equalizing fees for European and other non-U.S. members.

I am grateful to the ANHS Executive Council and all our association members for the help they've given me in leading these initiatives. Together, we fulfil our mission to support the research and creative work of individuals and groups from Nepal and the Himalayan region.

**Mary Cameron**

